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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5721st meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 July 2007, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the deteriorating security situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular in North and South Kivu. The Council is particularly concerned about the serious humanitarian consequences of violent actions of foreign armed groups, in particular the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), and military activities of the 'mixed' brigades.

"The Security Council urges all actors involved to refrain from any action leading to a military confrontation, that could result in further tension and aggravate the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Kivus, and to seek a solution to the current crisis through political and diplomatic means.

"The Security Council calls on the mixed brigades and their commanders to integrate into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and to stop recruiting activities. The Council condemns the recruitment of children in violation of applicable international law and urges the above-mentioned elements to release all children associated with them.

"The Security Council reiterates its grave concern at the continued threat that the foreign and Congolese armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo pose to the local population and security in the region. It reiterates its demand that those groups lay down their arms and engage voluntarily and without preconditions in their demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration, as appropriate.

"The Security Council invites the Government to develop in close coordination with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) a global plan to ensure security in the eastern part of the country, particularly by making further progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of Congolese combatants and the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of foreign combatants, and by ending impunity, promoting reconciliation, social cohesion, recovery and development in the region. It notes with concern the significant number of internally displaced persons and emphasizes the need

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to reassure the population and promote effective State administration in the region. The Council welcomes the intention of the Congolese authorities to facilitate an inclusive dialogue in the Kivus and looks forward to its implementation.

"The Security Council encourages MONUC to continue, in conformity with its mandate, to support the FARDC integrated brigades with a view to disarming recalcitrant foreign and Congolese armed groups in order to ensure their participation in the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process, as appropriate. It encourages the Congolese authorities to develop, in close consultation with MONUC, the necessary planning to that end and stresses that any operation which may require MONUC's support should be jointly planned with it and in accordance with international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. The Council requests the Secretary-General to keep it informed of this planning process. It also underlines the importance of continued efforts by MONUC, in implementing its mandate, to provide protection to civilians and contribute to the improvement of the security conditions in which humanitarian assistance is provided.

"The Security Council strongly encourages the Government to carry out the reform of the security sector nationwide as a matter of priority, by pursuing its efforts to consolidate the reform of the police and to integrate the armed forces. In this context, the Council acknowledges the concerted efforts of the Government and its partners towards convening a national round table on security sector reform, scheduled for October in Kinshasa.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern about the recruitment of combatants, including children in violation of applicable international law, inside and outside the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially by forces loyal to Laurent Nkunda.

"The Council urges the neighbouring states concerned to further facilitate the effective reintegration of returning former combatants and to prevent all recruiting activities within their territories. The Council recognizes that good regional relations, in particular relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, are an important factor in solving the crisis in the Kivus. It encourages both governments to continue to cooperate to solve their common security concerns, to improve their diplomatic relations, and to support the voluntary return of refugees, in consultation with the High Commissioner for Refugees.

"The Security Council encourages MONUC, in conformity with its mandate, to assist the Government, including through the provision of good offices, in its efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in the Kivus through promoting reconciliation and political dialogue."